

Ten tips to help keep your children safe when they are away from home

While many parents feel that they are faced with new and unprecedented challenges when trying to keep their children safe in today's fast-paced and increasingly global society, the National Center for Missing and Exploited Children offers these commonsense, general safety tips to help parents put these challenges into perspective.

1. Make sure you know where each of your children are at all times. Know your children's friends and be

Healthy Happenings

County Health Department

clear with your children about the places and homes they may visit. Make it a rule that your children check in with you when they arrive at or depart from

a particular location and when there is a change of plans. You should also let them know when you're running late or if your plans have changed so that they can see the rule is for safety purposes and not being used to "check up" on them.

2. Never leave children unattended in an automobile, whether it is running or not. Children should never be left unsupervised or allowed to spend time alone or with others in automobiles, as the potential dangers

to their safety outweigh any perceived convenience or "fun." Remind children to never hitchhike, approach a car or engage in a conversation with anyone within a car that they do not know and trust, or go anywhere with anyone without getting your permission first.

3. Be involved in your children's activities. As an active participant, you'll have a better opportunity to observe how the adults in charge interact with your children. If you are concerned about anyone's behavior, take it

up with the sponsoring organization. **4. Listen to your children.** Pay attention if they tell you that they don't want to be with someone or go somewhere. This may be an indication of more than a personality conflict or lack of interest in the activity or event.

5. Notice when someone shows one or all of your children a great deal of attention or begins giving them gifts. Take the time to talk to your children about the person and find out why the person is acting this way.

6. Teach your children that they have the right to say NO to any unwelcome, uncomfortable, or confusing touch or actions by others. Teach them to tell you immediately if this happens. Reassure them that you're there to help and it is okay to tell you anything.

7. Be sensitive to any changes in your children's behavior or attitude. Encourage open communication and learn how to be an active listener. Look and listen to small cues and clues that something may be troubling your children, because children are not always comfortable disclosing disturbing events or feelings. This may be because they are concerned about your reaction to their problems. If your children do confide problems to you, strive to remain calm, noncritical, and nonjudgemental. Listen compassionately to their concern and work with

them to get the help they need to resolve the problem.

8. Be sure to screen babysitters and caregivers. Many states now have a public registry that allows parents to check out individuals for prior criminal records and sex offenses. Check out references with other families who have used the caregiver or babysitter. Once you have chosen the caregiver, drop in unexpectedly to see how your children are doing. Ask your children how the experience with the caregiver was and listen carefully to the responses.

9. Practice basic safety skills with your children. Make an outing to a mall or park a "teachable" experience in which your children can practice checking with you, using pay telephones, going to the restroom with a friend and locating the adults who can help if they need assistance. Remember that allowing your children to wear clothing or carry items in public on which their name is displayed can bring about unwelcome attention from inappropriate people who may be looking for a way to start a conversation with your child.

10. Remember that there is no substitute for your attention and supervision. Being available and taking time to really know and listen to your children helps build feelings of safety and security.

Beware of 'quick loan' companies with big promises

Dear Attorney General Stovall: I have had bad credit for several years. I was recently needing a loan and saw an advertisement in the local classifieds that said "credit problems OK." It said applications could be taken over the phone. When I called the 1-800 number I was told the company could take my application over the phone and I was asked to fax a copy of a recent pay stub, my driver's license, and social security card. I was desperate for a quick loan, so I sent the information. The company called me back the next day and said that I was approved for a \$5000 loan, but because of my past credit problems I would need

Carla J. Stovall

Consumer Corner

to send a 10 percent down payment. I sent a wire transfer by Western Union to Canada. That was four weeks ago and I have not heard anything else from the company! The phone number I originally called has been disconnected. Attorney General Stovall, can anything be done to recover my money?

Dear Kansas Consumer:

Consumers should always be aware of any group that asks them to send copies of their identification; especially out of the country. Sending cash by money order is also a red flag as wire transfers are virtually untraceable. Not only is the consumer out the "down payment," there is a good chance of his or her identity being stolen. My office has found that these groups often set up in hotel rooms for two or three weeks and then move to another location. They pay for the newspaper ads with stolen credit cards and will set up 1-800 numbers on cell phones with a stolen identity.

My office sent your complaint to the Canadian authorities to investigate. I strongly encourage any consumer to

question any groups offering "easy loans" to those who have credit problems or have gone through bankruptcy. Most often these groups that advertise in newspapers are not legitimate and consumers who send their money will never see it again. If you need a loan, use a local financial institution or a well-established national company. If you have credit problems, businesses promising to fix your credit and/or provide financing regardless of your credit history will simply make your financial situation worse by charging you for services you can perform for free or by providing credit on terms you can't afford. Fixing credit problems is a long-term project without a short term fix.

Community College bull performance test underway

The 22nd annual Colby College Bull Test is now in full swing, said Dr. Harlan Thyfault, director of the beef production program at Colby Community College earlier this week.

This year the college took delivery of 63 bulls, he said on Tuesday, representing five different breeds and breeders from Kansas, Nebraska and Oklahoma.

The bulls will be given a pre-test adjustment period of 16 days to minimize previous management, feeding, and all other environmental differences.

The bull test measures average daily gain, weight per day of age and frame score, Thyfault said. Carcass data in the form of rib-eye area, back fat and percent intramuscular fat will also be taken with the use of ultrasound.

Bulls will also be given a thorough fertility examination to ensure reproductive soundness in each of the animals.

"It's hard to believe that we've been

at this 22 years, but again this year we have assembled an outstanding set of bulls," Thyfault said.

"These have been tough times for producers, and most of these bulls have already proven to be superior in many ways. We expect to present buyers with a high quality set of cattle come April."

The bull test is used as a central test station to evaluate the performance of potential sires from various herds under uniform conditions. The Colby College test station attempts to minimize the effects of various management systems.

The information collected from the test data is used to predict the performance merit of representatives from the various herds.

The test will end with a performance sale to market bulls that excelled in all areas of the testing process.

The sale will be held April 14, 2003 at the Colby College beef unit located on the college farm four miles east and one north of Colby.

ATTENTION.....

ALL GHOULS & BOYS....

(ages 5 to 12)



WE INVITE YOU TO ENTER THE.....



GREAT PUMPKIN-CARVING CONTEST!!

Have an adult help you with the carving at home, and bring it into the Free Press office and we'll put it on display for judging on October 30th!! Winners will be announced on October 31st.

DEADLINE IS OCTOBER 29 FOR BRINGING PUMPKINS IN!

Your pumpkin will be placed in the window so everyone can see your creation!! So have fun - you can make it a "weird" one, a "conventional" one or a "wacky" one!!

• PRIZES WILL BE ANNOUNCED AT A LATER DATE •



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OR.....

see us at Peoples State Bank parking lot on October 30 from 3:30-6:00 p.m., AND at the Arts & Crafts Fair, Community Bldg., Nov. 1 & 2 for the following:

- The "Satisfiers" Cookie Dough (72-pc. per box - 7 flavors & assortments) or 4 lb. Pail (9 flavors)
- White and Milk Chocolate (Nut Custers - Pecan, Almond, Cashew, Peanut)
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Great American
OUTDOOR TRAILS
Radio Magazine
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Every Friday afternoon you can hear you're favorite outdoor program from 3:30 to 5:00 pm. Tune in to Q100 and laugh as Jim Ferguson and his pals John Anderson, Officer Fred Four-eyes, Penny Ante and a whole cast of characters look at the outdoors in a whole different way. Plus outdoor news briefs, fishing and hunting reports, interviews and more.....

